

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE AND LABOR

REPUBLIC OF CUBA

# HENEQUEN

AND

HARD WOODS

ESTIMATE OF COSTS AND PROFITS  
RESULTING FROM THE CULTIVATION  
OF HENEQUEN AND THE MANUFACTURE  
: : OF SISAL IN THIS REPUBLIC : :



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BUREAU OF INFORMATION.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE AND LABOR  
HAVANA, CUBA.

# HENEQUEN AND ITS CULTIVATION IN CUBA

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Owin to the chaotic conditions which prevailed in Mexico during five or six years, the manufacture of sisal, and the industry as a whole, remained for some time practically at a standstill. Many of the large estates, we have been informed, were confiscated and their owners, discouraged sought investments in other parts of the world.

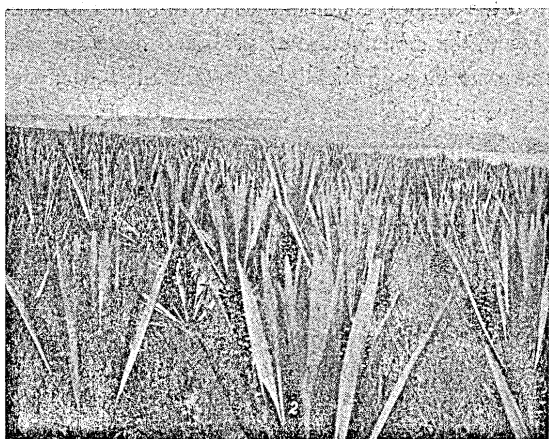
Cuba, lying at it does, in the same latitude as the Yucatan Peninsula, was the first contry sought, and rather to the surprise of the Mexican growers, they have discovered that both climate and soil are better adapted to the culture of henequen than the country in which it first won its fame as a money-maker.

The plant produces a strong fiber only where the soil covers a soft lime rock, from which the roots apparently secure those elements that give strength. Cuba has this anvantadge—not only does this condition of soil prevail in many places, but the rain fall, which is abundant, gives a far more rapid growth, so that a henequen sucker planted in Cuba, will produce in five years a yield that could not be attained under ten or twelve years in Yucatan.

As a natural result, lands suitable for henequen have suddenly come into demand and tracts that could have been purchased once \$1.00. per acre are now commanding from \$5.00 to \$25.00 Mexicans citizens have purchased some 20,000 acres of that land and planted it in henequen.

The plant, is indigenous to Cuba, and now that it is being cultivated, there is every reason to believe that the industry, within the next few years, will play an important part in the agricultural growth of the Republic.

Henequen offers many advantages to capital, especially to those investors who dislike to take chances on the certainty of returns. First of all the crop is absolutely sure, if planted on the right soil. Lack of rain or long droughts are matters of no importance, and the plant will continue to thrive and grow without deterioration in the quality of fiber. In Cuba this growth averages one inch on each leaf or "penca" per month,



and since it grows, as an old expert expressed it, "both day and night, rain or shine, even on Sundays and feast days, there is nothing to worry about."

More than all it has absolutely no enemies. Fire in the fields is impossible since there is nothing to burn; cattle will not eat it unless driven by starvation, which could not occur in Cuba. The crop is never stolen as the product could not be sold in small quantities. Since the plant is grown on hillsides, or well drained lands with firm foundation, the leaves may be cut and conveyed to the decortication plant at any season of the year.

The life of the henequen plant is fifteen to twenty years and the average yield in Cuba is about 70 lb. of fiber to every 1,000 leaves, although over 100 lb. have been secured in favorable localities. In Yucatan 40 to 50 lb. per 100 leaves is the average yield. In this connection it may be noted that at the World's Exposition in Buffalo, sisal made from henequen in Cuba, won the gold medal in competition with Yucatan and other countries.

The above mentioned advantages naturally appeal to capital, and more than all, perhaps, is the fact that the price of the product needed for rope, cordage, binding-twine, bagging, etc. is rapidly advancing.

## VALUABLE HARDWOODS IN CUBA

The virgin forests of Cuba, as in nearly all tropical countries endowed with rich soil, abound in valuable hardwoods such as mahogany, cedar, rose wood, ebony, lignum-vite, etc. The constant demand for cedar and mahogany since the first colonization of the Island, has caused these two woods to be culled out of nearly all of those forests bordering on the seashore, as far back at least, as the price of the wood on the coast, would cover the cost of cutting, trimming and hauling to deep water. This practice, carried on for a hundred years or more, has caused most of the coast land forests to be denuded of the two best known woods large enough for commercial purposes.

With the completion of the Van Horn Railroad that connects Havana in the west with Santiago de Cuba in the east, another area for cedar and mahogany was opened up, and has been worked quite extensively during the past twelve years.

There are still large amounts of excellent cedar and mahogany scattered throughout all of the mountainous districts of Cuba, but until more modern methods of transportation are secured than those furnished by the ox cart, and its attendant yokes of bulls, these sections will remain untouched, and will continue to constitute an unavailable asset.

There are 366 different woods registered and described in detail, in the archives of the Department of Agriculture, most of which are absolutely unknown outside of the Republic, but are extremely useful, not only for purposes of general construction, but for railroad ties that never

rot, handles for tools and implements, ship building, carving, inlaying and a thousand and one purposes for which hardwoods are always in demand.

The palm of course, of which there are hundreds of varieties, is more plentiful than any other one tree, and not only does its peculiar graceful form add marked beauty to the landscape, but either fruit, bark, leaves or peth of this great family of indogens, serves some useful purpose in the life of the native, or the pioneer who settles in the forests, or on the plains of Cuba.

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# ESTIMATE OF COST.

OF GROWING HENEQUEN AND PRODUCING SISAL  
OR FIBER FROM SAME IN THE REPUBLIC OF CUBA

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Coast of 75,000 plants @ \$12.00 per M.	\$ 900.00
„ „ preparing land.	770.00
„ „ planting at \$5.00 per M.	375.00
„ „ caring for and cultivation during years.	1,350.00
„ „ cutting 5,250,000 leaves at 50 cts per M.	2,625.00
„ „ conveying to mill at 20 cts per M.	1,050.00
„ „ decortication at 12½ per M.	654.00
„ „ baling 920 bales at 30 cts per bale.	276.00

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\$ 8,000.00

75,000 plants with 70 leaves to the  
plant=5,250,000 leaves.

5,250,000 leaves (70 lb. of fiber to etch 1,000

leaves)=367,500 lbs. at 7 cts lb. . . . \$ 25,725.00

Cost of production. . . . „ 8,000.00

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Net profit per 100 acres. . . . \$ 17,725.00

„ „ „ acre . . . . „ 177.25

Cots of cutting 3,000,000 "pencas" (40 pencas to the  
plant) @ 50 cts per M. . . . \$ 1,500.00

„ „ carting same to the mill at 20 cts per M. . . . 600.00

„ „ decortication at 12½ cts per M. . . . 375.00

„ „ baling at 30 cts per bale. . . . 157.00

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\$ 2,632.00

75,000 plants—40 leaves to the plant=3,000,000 leaves

70 lbs. of fiber to every 1,000 leaves=210,000 pounds.

210,000 lbs. of fiber at 7 cts per lb. . . . \$ 14,700.00

Cost of production . . . . „ 2,632.00

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Net profit per 100 acres. . . . \$ 12,068.00

„ „ „ acre . . . . „ 120.68

# LIST OF TOPICS

PERTAINING TO THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF CUBA IN REGARD  
TO WHICH INFORMATION MAY BE SECURED ON REQUEST.

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## SALIENT FACTS

Sugar Cane.

Horses.

Tobacco.

Vegetables.

Henequen.

Hogs.

Coffee.

Sheep.

Cacao.

Goats.

Mineral Resources.

Poultry.

Hardwoods.

Citrus fruit.

Textile Plants.

Pineapples.

Stock raising.

Grapes.

Cattle.

Mangoes.



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